



# The STEWARD

North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation  
*A Publication Sponsored by Friends of Weymouth Woods*

Michael F. Easley  
 Governor

March 2004

Volume 18 Number 3

William G. Ross Jr.  
 Secretary, DENR

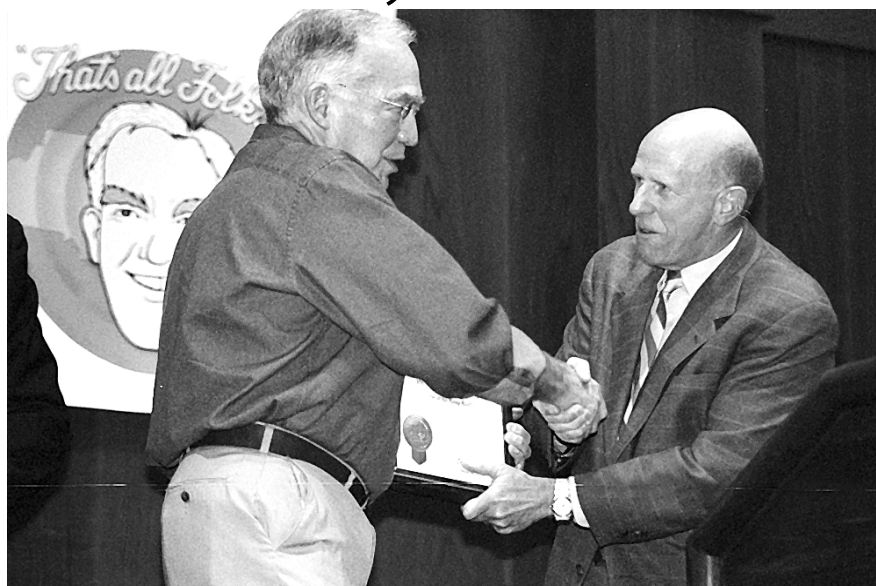
## NC SAYS, 'WELL DONE, MCKNELLY'

The state parks system said farewell to its long-time director Phil McKnelly Feb. 21, and the State of North Carolina added a "well done" for McKnelly's 18 years of leadership.

Among the many accolades bestowed on McKnelly at a retirement dinner in Raleigh was the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the governor's most esteemed award for citizen service to the state.

Secretary Bill Ross, of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, presented the award before nearly 200 guests. Among McKnelly's achievements, Ross said, were the 1993 parks bond referendum and the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund that arose from that success, the building of a strong environmental education ethic in the parks and the establishment of high professional and training standards for park rangers and superintendents.

"It seems to me that those were three great strokes for the parks system in this state and the point on which we need



*MCKNELLY, LEFT, ACCEPTS ORDER OF LONG LEAF PINE FROM SECRETARY ROSS IN APPRECIATION FOR HIS SERVICE TO NORTH CAROLINA.*

to continue building," Ross said.

Lewis Ledford, superintendent of state parks and acting director, said McKnelly came to the division in 1985 already carrying a personnel file "that would make an eagle scout proud," and he noted that McKnelly wrote in a cover letter when applying for his first job as superintendent,

"I believe there's a great deal of potential to be tapped."

McKnelly's legacy to the state parks system has been one of leadership, Ledford said.

Since 1985, the division grew from 165 employees to 402 and saw its annual operating budget expand from \$7 million to nearly \$35 million, he said. Money for improvements in the parks and for land acquisition went from spotty appropriations of as little as \$1 million annually to about \$18

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 INFO AND EVENTS**

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**Department of Environment and Natural Resources**

# UP CLOSE AND 'PERSONNEL'

**Joseph Martin** is a new Park Ranger I at Mount Mitchell State Park. He has a bachelor's degree in wildlife/fisheries management from North Carolina State University and worked with the university as a field technician.

**Michelle Mancinelli** is a new Park Ranger I at Eno River State Park. She earned a bachelor's degree in wildlife ecology and conservation/zoology from the University of Florida and has worked as a veterinarian assistant for two years.

**James Olivet** joined Falls Lake State Recreation Area as a grounds worker. Olivet has more than 16 years of related work experience.

**Glenn Sheppard** was hired at the Yorkshire Center as

a Facility Engineering Specialist. He has a bachelor's degree in construction management from East Carolina University and worked three years as a project coordinator and engineer inspector.

**Michael Willaford** was hired at Falls Lake State Recreation Area as a Park Ranger II. He has a bachelor's degree in fisheries and wildlife science from North Carolina State University and has worked five months as a research assistant.

**Justin Brown** joined Morrow Mountain State Park as a Park Ranger I. He has a bachelor's degree in fisheries/wildlife management from North Carolina State University. He has worked two years as a wildlife farm manager.

**Michael Hines** joined Crowders Mountain State Park as a Maintenance Mechanic II and has a diploma in auto diesel. He worked more than two years as a maintenance supervisor and more than five years as an aircraft loadmaster.

**Janet Braddy** is a new Park Ranger II at Falls Lake State Recreation Area. She has a bachelor's degree in fisheries/wildlife sciences from North Carolina State University and has worked with NC Wildlife Commission as a seasonal fire technician.

**Mary Birli** was hired in Planning as an Office Assistant III. She has a bachelor's degree in English/history from Eastern Oregon University and more than 13 years experience as an administrative and human resource assistant.

**Mark Miller** was promoted to Park Ranger III at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area. He has a bachelor's degree in forest recreation from the University of Wisconsin and has worked more than three years as a ranger with the division.

**Bill Duke** was promoted to Park Ranger I at William B. Umstead State Park. He has a bachelor's degree in naturalist/wildlife biology from Appalachian State University and more than four years experience as a park attendant.

**Donald Latulipe** was promoted to Park Ranger II at Stone Mountain State Park. He has a bachelor's degree in aquaculture/animal science from State University of New York, more than two years experience as a park ranger and almost four years experience as a technician.



## **AUTHORITY MEMBER HONORED**

*ROY ALEXANDER, ONE OF THE CHARTER MEMBERS OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION AUTHORITY, WAS PRESENTED A PLAQUE BY CHAIRMAN JONATHAN HOWES FOR HIS SERVICE AT A MAY 19 MEETING OF THE GROUP IN ELIZABETH CITY. ALEXANDER, FROM CHARLOTTE, CYCLED OFF THE AUTHORITY AFTER SERVING TWO TERMS COVERING A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS. DURING HIS TENURE, THE PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND PROVIDED \$72 MILLION TO STATE PARKS FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND LAND ACQUISITION AND \$33 MILLION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR PARK PROJECTS.*



# LAKE'S BIKE TRAIL BREAKS NEW GROUND

Lake Norman State Park's new Itusi Trail for mountain biking and hiking breaks new ground on all levels.

The Itusi (pronounced ee-TOO-see) has been a long-term project involving more than 20 volunteers who have, thus far, built 4.2 miles of trail by hand and who are well into another 2.5 miles in the project's second phase.

Ultimately, about 12 miles of gently rolling trail will be fashioned by teams of weekend volunteers from the Statesville and Charlotte areas, which will more than double the park's original trail mileage.

The Itusi literally breaks new ground with its location near the park's northern boundary that had never been used for trails or facilities. It's a moderately rugged expanse of mixed hardwood with small streams and gullies emptying into the huge lake.

The trail is also somewhat unique in the way it's operated, said Superintendent Casey Rhinehart, who has supervised construction since the beginning. "Everybody has been real good about the rules once they learn them and the reasons for them and try it out," he said.

On the Itusi, hikers must yield to mountain bikers. "Most mountain bike trails work the other way," Rhinehart said. "Our staff chose to operate the trail this way because hikers can hear approaching bikers whereas bikers have a tough time hearing the usually more quiet hikers."

Bikers are also required to travel the trail in one direction to avoid collisions. A series of loops makes it relatively easy for tired bikers to "bail out" and find a shorter route home.

Another innovative rule is that the trail is closed in very wet weather to everyone to prevent erosion and prolong the trail's lifespan. That's important to mountain bikers who spent eight years seeking approval for the trail and are anxious to prove themselves as good stewards.

A Statesville bike shop owner, Jeff Archer, first began lobbying for the trail. His efforts attracted Bob Karriker, another local spark plug and experienced trail designer who will soon have logged more than 1,000 volunteer hours. Each Saturday and Sunday, one or both men lead a small cadre of trail builders who cut brush, grub out stumps of saplings and haul rocks for gully

crossings.

Their dedication attracted high school groups and Charlotte-area biking clubs as well as an eagle scout who constructed a trailhead exhibit case.

Rhinehart has high praise for Karriker who, he said, is a thoughtful trail boss concerned about the resource and about aesthetics. The trail can be challenging in its changing elevation, but is not full of technical challenges that force riders over logs and rocks and through creeks.

One result is that the trail is popular with all age groups. Rhinehart said the majority of the 150-200 riders each week are thirty- and forty-somethings — not the extreme biker types — who spend one or two hours on the trail.

The Itusi Trail is shaping up as a destination for mountain bikers in the greater Charlotte-Lake Norman-Statesville area, which could likely give another dimension to Lake Norman State Park. It's a chance for the park to broaden its offerings beyond water-based recreation and benefit from a different support group.

Rhinehart said the trail's design is very similar to another destination and one of the nation's meccas for mountain biking — the Tsali Trail in Graham and Swain counties. Like Tsali, Lake Norman's 18-inch-wide track follows contours of the land and offers great lake views. The Tsali rambles beside Fontana Lake.

Rhinehart himself took up mountain biking a short time before the project began. He enjoys riding the trail and has enjoyed watching it evolve. "I volunteered some last year. It's kind of addicting," he said. "There's instant satisfaction in seeing the land transformed."



## LAKE NORMAN SWIM AREA

*CONTRACTORS ARE WORKING ON A NEW SWIM AREA AND BATHHOUSE AT LAKE NORMAN STATE PARK, TO REPLACE A SMALL BEACH ON AN IMPOUNDMENT. IT WILL BE THE ONLY PUBLIC SWIMMING AREA ON THE LAKE. THE PROJECT IS FUNDED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND.*

# 'HUMMERS' FIND WINTER HOME IN NC

By Chris Helms. Ranger  
Weymouth Woods SNA

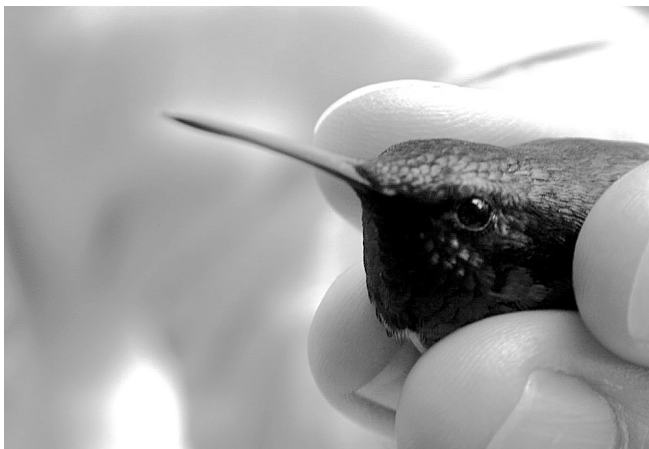
With a few inches of snow and ice on the ground in North Carolina in January, the typical bird that comes to mind is not usually a hummingbird. But, for Susan Campbell, a seasonal naturalist at Weymouth Woods State Nature Preserve, the colder the weather, the busier she is capturing and banding western species of hummingbirds that are being seen more frequently here in winter.

The most commonly reported of these once-called "vagrant" species is the rufous hummingbird. The male rufous is almost entirely red-brown with a shiny orange-red gorget, while females sport just a few red flecks on the throat.

Their breeding range extends from northern California and central Idaho north as far as southeastern Alaska. Although most winter in Mexico, many are now being reported at flowers and feeders in the Southeast between October and March.

Compared to the ruby-throated hummingbird — the only breeding species of hummingbird east of the Mississippi — the rufous is a slightly larger and hardier bird. They can handle below-freezing temperatures with ease, carrying on their search for insects and nectar despite wind, ice or snow. At night, respiration and heartbeat are slowed as these tiny marvels enter a short-term torpor to conserve energy.

The mild conditions early this winter brought much hummer work for Susan in western North Carolina, including an Ashe County couple that had four rufous hummingbirds in their yard. Most reports, however, come from the coast



*HUMMINGBIRDS ARE MEASURED, WEIGHED, PHOTOGRAPHED AND BANDED AT THE NATURE PRESERVE.*



*NATURALIST CAMPBELL WITH VISITING SCHOOL CLASS.*

where more moderate weather allows thick evergreen vegetation and insects even in winter.

Calliope, black-chinned, broad-tailed, Anna's, Allen's, broad-billed, green violet-ear and blue-throated have also been documented in our state, largely due to Susan's statewide hummer banding campaign. Her most remarkable banding was a green-breasted mango (no, I'm not making this name up) that appeared during light snow at a feeder in Gastonia, in November, 2000. This was only the eighth sighting of this tropical beauty in the U.S. and the first one outside of Texas.

Susan encourages hummer enthusiasts to continue to offer sugar water in an easily visible feeder throughout the winter, taking it in on nights of a hard freeze. Feeders at this time of year are certainly a help to these birds, but clearly they can survive without human assistance. Not only are there winter blooming plants in the Southeast, but there are also sapsucker wells at which hummingbirds are known to take an easy meal of sucrose in the form of sap.

Susan is not quite quick enough to nab these feathered jewels in flight, and while traditional mist nets with a small mesh can be used, she more often uses a pull-string wire cage trap set up around a feeder familiar to the birds.

The bird is measured, weighed, photographed and fitted with a tiny, numbered, aluminum band that Susan fabricates. The process is not harmful, nor does it scare the bird away from the feeder. Simply put, banding is the only way to identify individual hummingbirds and assess their survival and condition over time.

These birds are returning to the state, too.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 5*

A beautiful male has spent three winters here in Moore County, and in coastal Hampstead, a rufous came back for an amazing five consecutive winters. With this work, pieces of the puzzle come together as birds are recaptured, sometimes in unexpected locations.

Two years ago Susan banded a juvenile rufous in western North Carolina and was thrilled to hear of its recapture last November at a feeder in Michigan. A female rufous caught in Pinehurst in January, 2002, surprised Susan by having a band already in place. It was learned that this bird had been wandering the Southeast since her first winter in 1999, when she was banded in central Louisiana.

During the summer of 2003, Susan banded 74 ruby-throated hummingbirds at Weymouth Woods, several of these being recaptures from the previous year and one being a recapture from 2001. Several interpretive programs were scheduled around her banding and

Wednesday morning sessions were open to the public. Susan even rewards participants by placing a bird in the hand of a lucky student or teacher for release back into the wild, creating a memory not soon forgotten.

In addition to her work at Weymouth Woods, Susan Campbell is affiliated with the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and the Hummer Bird Study Group in Clay, Ala. It was through this group, along the Gulf coast, that she trained to become a hummingbird bander under renowned rubythroat expert Bob Sargent. Susan is currently the only licensed hummingbird bander in North Carolina and we are indeed lucky to have her in our area and as a seasonal at Weymouth Woods.

Folks that hear of winter hummingbirds through March 15 can contact Susan through Weymouth Woods at 910-692-2167 or through a new museum website at: [www.naturalsciences.org/nchummers](http://www.naturalsciences.org/nchummers).

## SWAMP SET AS UNDERGROUND RR SITE

That the Great Dismal Swamp was a refuge for runaway slaves was documented as early as 1784 by an English visitor to the area. By 1853, there were tales of progeny of runaways who lived and died having never left the nearly impenetrable forest there.

But the swamp's place in history as a station in the famed Underground Railroad is just now being researched and recognized.

It is believed that the established community in the swamp was a stopping point for others seeking ship's passage from ports in Elizabeth City, Norfolk and Portsmouth.

The National Park Service has been coordinating preservation and education efforts nationally through its National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, and in February the Great Dismal Swamp – and by extension, Dismal Swamp State Natural Area – was included during a ceremony



in Chesapeake, Va.

Five sites designated as part of the program were the Dismal Swamp State Natural Area, Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Dismal Swamp Canal, Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center and Elizabeth City State University.

Henry Stokes, superintendent of the natural area, and Lewis Ledford, superintendent of state parks,

represented the division at the ceremony.

The five North Carolina sites have traditionally worked together on projects and interpretive events. Some initial discussion has taken place regarding similarly designed interpretive panels for each of the sites.

Construction is scheduled to begin later this year on a 6,500-square-foot visitor's center at the state natural area. Upon its opening, the natural area will become the state park system's second largest operational unit at 14,344 acres.

The Underground Railroad designation will add to the interpretive message of the natural area and help to weave together the cultural and natural history of the swamp. It may also entice some people who might not otherwise consider visiting the state natural area and the adjacent refuge.



million guaranteed by the trust fund.

"During your watch, there have been better facilities put in all parks and thousands of acres preserved for future generations," he told McKnelly.

McKnelly retired Feb. 1 after 18 years with the division, accepting a position as executive director of the National Association of State Park Directors, an organization for which he served as president from 2001-2003.

A native of Little Rock, Ark., McKnelly came to the state first as an associate professor at North Carolina State University in the Department of Recreation Resources Administration. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas with a doctorate from Texas A&M University.

After a six-year stint in Kentucky as head of environmental education at TVA's Land Between the Lakes, he returned to the state as superintendent of state parks. He became deputy director in 1986 and director in 1989.

He has been active in the NC Recreation and Parks Society and the Southeastern Association of State Park Directors and, last year, accepted a Lifetime Achievement Award from NCSU.



*McKNELLY TALKS WITH JODY MERRITT, CENTER, OF FORT MACON STATE PARK, AND ALLEN DE HART, OF THE FRIENDS OF THE MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA TRAIL.*

## Thanks Phil!



*McKNELLY AND TOM WELLS, FORMER SUPERINTENDENT OF STATE PARKS, SHARE THE STAGE.*

Jonathon Howes, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Authority and a former secretary of the department, said McKnelly quickly took a leadership role in laying groundwork for the first-ever state parks bond referendum and the trust fund, buttonholing legislators and "whispering in their ears, telling them this was a good thing and that they ought to do it."

Howes said, "Phil McKnelly, you transmit the state better than it was before you came, and we are forever going to be in your debt."

On taking the podium, McKnelly said there are still many division goals to accomplish, "But, it does us good occasionally to look at the good things when sometimes we're so overwhelmed by what needs to be done...We forget to say, 'Hey folks, we've had a pretty good run.'"

McKnelly took the occasion to thank his wife Susan for her support and to address his college-age children, Leslie and David.

"Most of the things I've done, and that were done by the other people in this room, were done for your generation," he told them. "The environment is the only thing we can't dominate...It is rather our responsibility to protect it and pass it along to future generations. I hope you pass it along to your kids in better shape than it is tonight."

McKnelly noted he always felt a special relationship with people in the parks and in the world of conservation. "They gave me the illusion of leading. That's because somebody was always pushing me to get out in front of them."

# NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT 2004

PARK	JANUARY TOTAL YTD		JANUARY TOTAL YTD		% CHANGE (2003/2004)	
	2004	JAN. 2004	2003	JAN. 2003	JAN.	YTD
CAROLINA BEACH	9,117	9,117	10,008	10,008	-9%	-9%
CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	4,720	4,720	4,260	4,260	11%	11%
CROWDER'S MOUNTAIN	23,548	23,548	17,285	17,285	36%	36%
ENO RIVER	18,655	18,655	12,061	12,061	55%	55%
OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN	2,030	2,030	0	0	0%	0%
FALLS LAKE	11,633	11,633	6,318	6,318	84%	84%
FORT FISHER	30,000	30,000	22,201	22,201	35%	35%
FORT MACON	44,516	44,516	39,922	39,922	12%	12%
GOOSE CREEK	9,709	9,709	9,248	9,248	5%	5%
GORGES	3,618	3,618	3,922	3,922	-8%	-8%
HAMMOCKS BEACH	5,544	5,544	7,887	7,887	-30%	-30%
HANGING ROCK	9,559	9,559	9,366	9,366	2%	2%
JOCKEY'S RIDGE	19,465	19,465	61,072	61,072	-68%	-68%
JONES LAKE	4,180	4,180	5,084	5,084	-18%	-18%
JORDAN LAKE	13,908	13,908	10,148	10,148	37%	37%
KERR LAKE	31,992	31,992	36,804	36,804	-13%	-13%
LAKE JAMES	5,342	5,342	6,657	6,657	-20%	-20%
LAKE NORMAN	24,099	24,099	750	750	3113%	3113%
LAKE WACCAMAW	3,554	3,554	4,688	4,688	-24%	-24%
LUMBER RIVER	4,170	4,170	1,660	1,660	151%	151%
MEDOC MOUNTAIN	2,239	2,239	0	0	0%	0%
MERCHANT'S MILLPOND	4,236	4,236	2,571	2,571	65%	65%
MORROW MOUNTAIN	7,560	7,560	11,280	11,280	-33%	-33%
MOUNT JEFFERSON	5,111	5,111	7,419	7,419	-31%	-31%
MOUNT MITCHELL	6,094	6,094	3,438	3,438	77%	77%
NEW RIVER	5,201	5,201	8,152	8,152	-36%	-36%
PETTIGREW	2,722	2,722	5,079	5,079	-46%	-46%
PILOT MOUNTAIN	16,369	16,369	13,531	13,531	21%	21%
RAVEN ROCK	5,891	5,891	5,203	5,203	13%	13%
SINGLETARY LAKE	350	350	653	653	-46%	-46%
SOUTH MOUNTAINS	8,408	8,408	6,500	6,500	29%	29%
STONE MOUNTAIN	15,600	15,600	7,532	7,532	107%	107%
WEYMOUTH WOODS	3,448	3,448	2,451	2,451	41%	41%
WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD	28,930	28,930	9,523	9,523	204%	204%
<b>SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL</b>	<b>391,518</b>	<b>391,518</b>	<b>352,673</b>	<b>352,673</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>

# Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation is:

to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;

to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina;

*and*

to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources

for all citizens and visitors of North Carolina.

## ***SAFETY ZONE***

**Clean up hazards;  
scrub out accidents**

✓ Keep your work area clean and orderly.

✓ If you make a mess, clean it up. Never let safety be someone else's job.

✓ Keep access clear to emergency exits, equipment and equipment shutoffs.

✓ Prevent accidents by clearly identifying any hazards that cannot be removed.



### *The Steward*

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